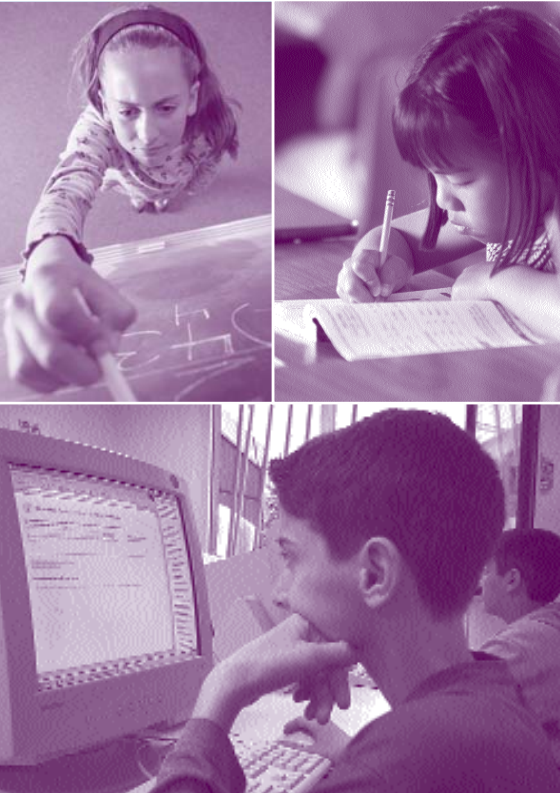


State Representative **Dave Crooks**



Session Report



- ✓ The New State Budget
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- ✓ Keeping Crane Strong
- ✓ Economic Development
- ✓ New Voter ID Law

INDIANA'S NEW BUDGET



School Funding Cuts and Increased Property Taxes

The new state budget that passed by a narrow margin increases property taxes and, at the same time, cuts funding for local schools. After years of bipartisan efforts to reform education and reduce property taxes, the majority party has approved a budget that will cut state funding for many schools and raise property taxes by nearly \$850 million.

I voted "NO" on the final version of the state budget because of the negative impact it will have on education, children and those who pay property taxes. I believe there will be many victims of the new state budget.

There are no minimum guarantees in state funding for schools, which means more than 140 school corporations will receive less money. Those corporations will be forced into eliminating teachers, cutting programs and increasing class sizes. Any additional funding for schools

will come primarily from raising local property taxes.

There will be reduced state support through the Property Tax Replacement Credit (PTRC), another move that will increase local property taxes. This eliminates the promise of just three years ago to provide more state support to combat rising property taxes in light of the historic and controversial statewide reassessment.

In addition, funding for the program that provides health care for the elderly, disabled and children will increase by five percent, although bipartisan experts have predicted a 10-percent growth. State assistance for road repairs and improvements will decrease as well.

It is a shame that the legacy of this session will be a budget that turns its back on Indiana's schoolchildren and property taxpayers. For anyone who cares about education and local taxpayers, it is simply indefensible.

Keeping Crane Strong

I was pleased to support several bills adopted to help preserve jobs at the Crane military base and create more civilian jobs in the area.

- Senate Enrolled Act 571 establishes a qualified military base enhancement area near Crane with tax incentives to encourage business to locate there. It also includes language I authored which allows multiple counties to work together when they create certified technology parks or other economic development commissions.

- House Enrolled Act 1022 preserves one of Crane's greatest strengths—its remote location and isolation from populated areas. This law requires local governments near Crane to consult with the military facility concerning planning and zoning actions within three miles of Crane so the governments do not make decisions that will hinder the facility's operation.

While I'm pleased the base will remain open, I'm disappointed the BRAC Commission has recommended that 683 jobs be realigned at Crane. This could result in an additional 300 contract jobs leaving Crane. I've learned the economic impact based on a percentage of jobs lost at Crane is the second highest nationwide. I find this news unacceptable. I and other leaders recently met with BRAC Commissioner Samuel Skinner following his tour of the base in Martin County. I will work with leaders from both political parties to do everything possible to convince the BRAC Commission to limit job losses at Crane.



Rep. Crooks discusses legislation during debate on the House floor.

Governor Wins— Daylight-Saving Time

The people who live and work in the 63rd House District have made their feelings about daylight-saving time very clear. They don't want it, but if they must have it, the majority prefer to be in the Central Time Zone.

After Gov. Mitch Daniels made passage of DST one of his priorities during the 2005 legislative session, enough lawmakers supported a bill to make the time change go into effect next year.

What does passage of this bill mean to the people in the 63rd District?

Starting next spring, we will be on the same time as Indianapolis, New York City and Washington, D.C., throughout the entire year.

If you work in Illinois or in one of these five Indiana counties—Gibson, Spencer, Warrick, Vanderburgh or Posey—your time at home will always be an hour ahead of your time at work. If you have a job from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., you will not get out of work until 6 p.m., and you aren't going to get home until 6:30 or 7 p.m. In the summertime, that means you probably won't be able to get home in time to see your kids play Little League or soccer.

To many of us, this doesn't make any sense. It makes more sense for this area to be on Central Time because many of the places we work are already on that time. Evansville, Chicago and St. Louis are a lot closer to us than New York or Boston.

Those who support DST believe it will help the people of the 63rd District to be on a different time from major areas of commerce that are closer to us, such as Evansville and other communities in Southwest Indiana, as well as cities and towns just across the border in Illinois.

I took the lead in expressing those concerns, both to the governor and my fellow lawmakers. As a result, the final bill contains language requiring Gov. Daniels to ask the U.S. Department of Transportation to conduct statewide hearings to determine if all or a portion of Indiana should move to Central Time.

I hope these hearings take place very soon, and we are able to get the changes in place that will move our area to Central Time. If no change is made, I feel the move to daylight-saving time will cause great harm to the lives of many Hoosiers.

Rest assured that I will stay in touch with you on this critical subject in the months to come.



Rep. Dave Crooks speaks to legislators on the House floor during the debate on daylight-saving time.

Voter ID: Flawed Reform

You might have heard that the General Assembly passed a partisan plan to require individuals to show photo identification in order to vote on Election Day.

Upon first glance, this sounds like a good idea. Present your driver's license and you can vote. Who couldn't meet that requirement?

People who live at nursing homes and no longer drive, for one. Women who have married and changed their names, because their driver's licenses will not match their voter registration files. Senior citizens born in an era of inadequate record-keeping where finding a birth certificate may be nearly impossible.

The idea has been sold as a way to eliminate fraud and restore honesty to the electoral process. **What advocates for the bill have failed to tell you is that this bill will surely deny some Hoosiers the right to vote.**

Consider the cases of electoral fraud that have occurred in recent years in Indiana. They all have involved absentee ballots, and this legislation fails to address that issue. As the majority party advanced this proposal, it did not provide a single instance where electoral fraud in Indiana has occurred at a polling site.

This legislation has several major flaws, and a court challenge already has been launched to determine if it violates basic principles of the Indiana Constitution.

The vast majority of voters have photo IDs and should be required to show them. Those who do not have photo ID should not lose the right to vote.

Contact

Representative

**Dave
Crooks**



Office:

1-800-382-9842

Address:

1205 Winbrook Drive
Washington, IN 47501

Online:

H63@in.gov
www.in.gov/H63

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Economic Development

I believe it is the duty of the General Assembly to provide the opportunities for Indiana to create, maintain and increase good-paying jobs in growth areas of our economy. This year's legislature made economic development a priority.

In fact, the very first bill passed into law this session created a new public-private group—the Indiana Economic Development Corporation—to serve as the leader for development efforts across our state. I was especially pleased proposed amendments I offered were accepted to ensure this new corporation is accountable to the public.

Other measures designed to help spur economic growth include increasing the research and development tax credit, phasing out the

sales tax on research and development equipment, and extending the life and use of EDGE tax credits that help businesses retain and create jobs.

We also passed a measure that will speed the process of obtaining permits so developers can begin construction on new industrial sites. Small business owners will receive additional tax breaks under new legislation that will also reduce the potential that they will be harmed by government regulation.

All of these reforms can help economic growth in Indiana. We must remain attuned to the opportunities in a changing environment, and I will continue to search for ways to grow our economy and increase good-paying jobs.

Washington State Champs Visit Statehouse

Rep. Crooks honors the Washington state championship basketball team and Mr. Basketball Luke Zeller during a ceremony on the House floor.



Representative Dave Crooks

200 W. Washington St.
Indianapolis IN 46204

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